

**CONFIDENTIAL**

4 February 1957

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:**

**SUBJECT:** Conference at National Science Foundation on Development of an Area-Language Specialist Register

1. Per request by [REDACTED], OCR/Liaison Division, the undersigned attended on 30 January 1957 a meeting held at the National Science Foundation, 1520 H. Street, N. W., to discuss the proposed development of a register of Area-Language Specialist personnel by the Foundation. Invited to the meeting were representatives of ODM, OCB, Department of Defense, Department of the Army (Special Warfare), USAF (D/I), State Department, Public Health and Welfare Department, USIA, ICA, Civil Service Commission, Department of Agriculture, and the American Council of Learned Societies. The undersigned attended as an observer only, as did [REDACTED] FEO. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Tom Mills of the National Science Foundation.

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**2. Background**

a. At present, national-level registers of specialist personnel exist only for specialists in the physical sciences, earth sciences, life sciences (anatomy, zoology, biology, etc.), meteorology, geography, psychology, certain engineering specialties and others (see Enclosure 1, attached to original only). These registers, developed at a previous time by the National Science Foundation, have three objectives: 1) To serve as a stand-by tool for canvassing resources in time of emergency, 2) to provide a statistical aid to the review of the adequacy and character of specialist personnel, and 3) to act as an employment aid for business and government, in the event of wartime mobilization only. The registers provide detailed information, recorded on IBM cards and microfilm, as to age, sex, geographical location, language qualifications, etc., in addition to the specialties possessed by the individual.

b. The National Science Foundation is also conducting a national survey of current earned doctoral degrees with the intent of identifying educational trends in the development of specialist personnel (Enclosure 2). At the same time, it is surveying the actual employment of the specialists so registered by sending them questionnaires

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six months to a year after their completion of work for their degree.

c. The concept of a separate Area-Language Specialist Register has been investigated in the past by the Civil Service Commission (on the request of ODM); however, the Department of Defense was unable at that time to express sufficiently distinct requirements, and the idea died a natural death.

d. The Department of Defense has now transmitted to ODM a strong recommendation for development of a similar register, though with primary reference to language competence. ODM has, in turn, indicated to National Science Foundation the advisability of exploring a combined Area-Language Specialist Register.

### 3. Substance of Conference

a. Discussion concentrated on the uses for the register, with some attention to the terms of reference to be considered in designing it. It was agreed that in general the register should have great utility. Individual comments are as follows:

NSA - anticipates very great need; Area-Specialist positions are presently under proposal to Congress for incorporation in a Career Service.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - interested primarily in disciplines subdivided by area specialization rather than the reverse; requires only broad area distinctions.

HEALTH EDUCATION and WELFARE - rather minor interest in area knowledge; primary requirement is professional competence.

STATE DEPARTMENT (PSI) - such register would lend itself primarily to teaching and consultation requirements rather than to recruitment because of the heavy requirement in State on language and the behavioral sciences in addition to area knowledge. The department depends primarily on its own training program in which 100 students are now enrolled here and abroad. (See Area Specialist appraisal sheet, Enclosure 3.)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - the requirement for professional competence in agriculture makes any register, inadequate; would expect to continue to train most of its people.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE - Psychological Warfare and Unconventional Warfare place heaviest emphasis on disciplines, with area competence coming second; has own foreign area training program, military personnel only.

USAF - requires generalists rather than specialists except in the targeting field. Will have great need for Area Specialists in the event of mobilization since the military personnel will leave to fight the war.

b. The point was made that a review of the whole concept of mobilization allocations may be necessary before adequate cooperation may be obtained from government agencies in developing the register. While most agencies presently have a register of sorts for their own requirements which in turn would be most useful in establishing the master register, the agencies distinctly conflict with one another in their presumptions of priority in the procurement of specialist personnel. This has in the past led to a dog-in-the-manger attitude with regard to the development of community-wide resources.

c. The discussion of appropriate terms of reference indicated that such coordination must be done before there is agreement on the information to be recorded. It was tentatively commented that decision must be made on the manner of recording such information as disciplines and sub-disciplines, dialects within language groups, levels of competence in languages, non-academic area study or experience, and identification of the differences in the mobilization role (e.g. the generalist versus the specialist).

d. The OCB representative remarked that an intangible but nonetheless important benefit of the register will be its attainment of a conclusive statement of the facts--an inventory of the situation which should allay some official worries and feelings of pressure which are not actually appropriate.

e. The group agreed that each agency, in contemplating detailed requirements for the register should devote considerable thought to its actual mobilization requirements and that this should be applied to the specific responses to be made in future consultations.

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4. The National Science Foundation intends to dispatch a letter to each interested Agency, including the CIA, which will restate the proposal for the register and request specific affirmative or non-affirmative indication of interest. It is recommended that the response to this letter, as well as future conferences which may be called with regard to the register, be coordinated further with the Office of Personnel, OCI, and appropriate elements of DD/P.

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